



From The Desk Of DEAN TRANTALIS

Fort Lauderdale City Commission • District II

DECEMBER 2014

A look ahead to progress in 2015

I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving and had a chance to participate in the wonderful events that the city held to launch the holiday season. We've lit up the beach, the downtown as well as Sistrunk Boulevard in the last couple weeks. The city continues to sparkle.

While you prepare for the holidays with family and friends, let me fill you in on progress that the city has been making on a number of important fronts. I think we will have a lot to look forward to in 2015.

The City Commission is continuing to discuss how best to improve the central beach area before its special status as a redevelopment district expires in five years. We are looking at ways to expand the Las Olas Marina so it can accommodate more and larger boats. Additionally, we are discussing how best to locate parking so it's convenient for the entire beach without imposing on the quality of life of nearby residents.

Other aspects of the plans are improvements to D.C. Alexander Park and a more pedestrian friendly environment on Las Olas Boulevard from Seabreeze Boulevard to A1A.

One troubling component of our beach redevelopment has been the redesign of the Aquatic Center next to the Bahia Mar. The goal was to achieve a world-class facility that would house the International Swimming Hall of Fame and stem the hemorrhaging of almost a million dollars in operating costs per year. The cost was not to exceed \$33 million. The current proposal falls way short of these goals. It may require a re-bid of the project, or we may need to consider alternative uses for the land and money.

Some immediate beach improvements are underway.

The city has agreed that sand from hotel construction projects along A1A can be used to renourish the dunes on the beach. We will preserve views along the roadway, but such dunes will also help protect the beach from erosion and lessen the impact of

tropical storms. And both on the beach and downtown, the city will wrap more utility boxes with art and useful information.

The last month has seen advancement of important infrastructure improvements.

The city kicked off the mobility master plan for the Lake Ridge area that will look at traffic improvements not only within the neighborhood but the congested intersection of Northeast 15th Avenue and Sunrise Boulevard. The city also hosted a charrette with more than 30 people in attendance to discuss ways to improve Andrews Avenue north of downtown. An often forgotten entryway into the city may soon have a new look.

Residents of the Las Olas Isles and Isle of Venice neighborhoods should be pleased to hear a project to reduce stormwater flooding has been fully funded. We received a \$700,000 grant from the state and supplemented that with \$541,600 in city money. Over the next 12 months, we will install tidal valves and make other stormwater improvements to those neighborhoods.

I recently lent support to a Victoria Park effort to obtain more seats for their neighborhood at Virginia Shuman Young Elementary School. At our request, the City Commission approved a resolution asking the School Board to add 50 more seats to the 150 already prioritized for children from the surrounding area. Broward School Superintendent Robert Runice has agreed to meet with the neighborhood soon and discuss the issue further.

Virginia Shuman Young offers a great Montessori program, but unfortunately, that has resulted in neighborhood children being sent to



schools miles away. This is an extreme burden on families. I'd like for us to find a way to respect the desires of these parents to send their children to their neighborhood school.

I'm also hopeful that we can find some ways to regulate short-term vacation rentals. Not a week goes by when the city doesn't receive a complaint about rambunctious tourists renting next door.

The state Legislature barred cities years ago from taking action against these rentals, but gave us back some limited authority earlier this year.

At our request, the city attorney has investigated what we can do under the new law. While we still cannot regulate the duration and frequency of rentals, our attorney says we could create a citywide registry in which we license these rentals and require information on who can be called 24-7 with any problems. The attorney also says we can address the negative impact of these rentals with rules about noise, the number of occupants, parking and property maintenance.

In closing, I wish everyone a happy and prosperous 2015. If you don't have New Year's Eve plans, feel free to join us at the annual Downtown Countdown in Himmarshee Village.

Sincerely,

Interested in serving your city? Join a board or committee

Commissioner Trantalis currently has openings for positions on various boards and committees in Fort Lauderdale.

Please look through the list below and see if you may be interested in being part of your city government.

1. **Audit Advisory Board.** It advises the City Commission on appointing the independent auditor, reviews the draft annual audited financial statements and auditor's annual management letter recommendations, and makes recommendations on responses to audit findings. When possible, members should be familiar with auditing procedures. This board meets quarterly.

2. **Central City Community Redevelopment Advisory Board.** It makes recommendations to the City Commission about the redevelopment of the Central City area between Sunrise Boulevard and 16th Street and Interstate 95 and Progresso Drive. We specifically are searching for an urban planner/design professional and a building contractor. This board meets the first Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. at City Hall.

3. **Community Appearance Board.** It helps recognize residents who have improved their community by beautifying their property. This board meets the second Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall.

4. **Community Services Board.** It reviews applications for Community Grant allocations for public service activities and for housing opportunities for people with AIDS. This board meets the second Monday of each month at 4 p.m. at City Hall. We are looking for a District 2 representative and an at-large representative who either has HIV/AIDS or advocates for the HIV/AIDS community.

5. **Sustainability Advisory Board.** It advises the city regarding environmental sustainability and recommends strategies for conversation and energy efficiency. This board meets the fourth Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall.

Please contact Commissioner Trantalis' assistant, Scott Wyman, at swyman@fortlauderdale.gov if interested.



Commissioner Trantalis welcomes the first annual Gay Days Fort Lauderdale event during Thanksgiving Day weekend at their host hotel, the W.



Commissioner Trantalis helps honor Merrilyn Rathbun during a historic play in Middle River Terrace Park. She was recognized for her years of work toward historic preservation in the city. Courtesy: Cal Deal



Commissioner Trantalis and Jason King of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation launch a special concert at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts in recognition of the grand opening of the World AIDS Museum.